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AGENCY INFORMATION HANDLING PROBLEMS

Hypothesis

1. It is hypothesized that there is an information processing problem within the Agency, at least as far as the production analyst shops are concerned. By "problem" is meant: present day technology is not being used to a significant extent--even at the present dollar resource level.

2. It is hypothesized further that there is a significant difference between the approach to data processing in support of such activities as payroll, inventory control, trajectory analysis, mensuration, etc., and the approach to information processing in support of the intelligence information needs of production analysts. The former is characterized by relatively fixed data, computational requirements, and reporting formats; the latter is characterized

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by the high volume of narrative textual information any piece of which will have different uses to different analysts, and all of which is subject to severe semantic-ambiguity problems that must be considered when processed by computer. (For example, the word "strike" means one thing when coordinated with a term that represents the concept "labor;" and it means another when coordinated with a term that represents the concept "aircraft" or "target.")

Why Is There A Problem?

3. There are two major reasons. First, there is no central management of the Agency's information handling systems. Presently, individual offices are free to develop information handling projects that may cost significant resources and offer relatively narrow applications if successful, and possibly duplicating to some extent the work of other offices. As example, we see CRS's MAD (Machine-Assisted Dissemination) project developed at a cost of over

\$200,000 and several man years' effort only to have the decision made to replace it with another office's development; no action had been taken to have the MAD development made part of the big picture. Thus too, we see the CRS computer center, after many years in the making, closed and its operations consolidated with OJCS. This was accomplished without any meaningful study of the potential benefits of a central computer facility to support intelligence information processing.

4. Secondly, the overall systems analysis capability within the Agency is spread very thin over the many offices. Not only are they thin, but many are given the title without the benefits of any real training or background; as though the title somehow took care of that. Many computer systems analysts exist in OJCS where naturally enough their emphasis will be to seek EDP solutions to each problem. Presently, production analysts do not know where to get advice on their information handling problems.

How To Improve The Situation?

5. How to improve? Create a systems analysis staff under the DCI. This staff would review the information handling procedures being used within the Agency and would give special attention to the information handling development projects that are underway. The staff would determine the extent to which centralization of the information handling function makes sense. For example, perhaps all major development work should take place within the DDM&S; perhaps each directorate should have a systems staff that would coordinate its activities with the DCI's staff.